



NIEHS

Worker Education and Training Program

April 21-23, 2004
Washington, DC

**Training Partnerships for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness:
A Conference to Build Stronger Partnerships On Disaster Response Training**

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MEETING NOTES FROM SECOND OSHA PLENARY: WORKER PROTECTION AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Friday, April 23

Second OSHA Plenary: Worker Protection and Homeland Security

This plenary was a review of OSHA's newly emerging role in disaster response and homeland security and the actions the agency has taken to prepare for its new challenges.

Ruth McCully, Director, Directorate of Science, Technology and Medicine spoke first. She explained why a National Emergency Management Plan (NEMP) was developed. She explained that during the WTC response over 1000 OSHA staff members were deployed to the WTC over 10 months. During this time there were 15K work shifts, 131,000 respirators distributed, >6500 air samples taken, 3000 workers notified, specialized expertise e.g. crane team, 24/7 safety monitoring and creative and successful partnership with nFEMA, EPA, Army Corp and Coast Guard. They were also the lead agency for worker health and safety during the Anthrax decontamination.

She explained they learned lessons from these incidents. In order to improve preparedness for the future it was clear that they would need Regional Plans (REMPS) supported by a National Plan (NEMP). The NEMP is the agency's first homeland security directive. It is also OSHA's emergency management plan during nationally significant incidents. It is a living document. Part of the plan includes specialized response teams (SRTs). SRTs are made up of Four Teams: Toxic Chemicals, Biological Agents, Ionizing Radiation, and Structural Collapse. They enhance existing regional WMD capabilities. They contain an average of seven members/team that are dispersed throughout agency and regions and are subject matter expertise in the agency. OSHA is also implementing many training initiatives.

John Ferris, Special Assistant for Homeland Security then discussed OSHA's involvement in NIMS/NRP. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) establishes the national standard for incident management response structures. It is based on the National Interagency Incident Management System (NIIMS) Incident Command System (ICS). It calls for interoperability of response structure, equipment, communications, qualifications and certifications. It employs a continuous cycle of planning, training, equipping, exercising, evaluating and taking corrective action. It utilizes safety officers. NIMS requires and oversees the implementation of the ICS system nationwide. It also oversees the allocation of funds to State and Local Government. It specifically addresses the role of the Safety Officer in multi-agency responses.

The National Integration Center (NIC) coordinates and oversees the (NIMS). The NIC educates the Nation on the NIMS/ICS, promote interoperability, promotes minimal training requirements & course curricula for EP&R personnel, establishes national standards for incident management exercises and establishes national standards, guides and protocols for qualifications and certifications of responders and incident managers.

This creates an opportunity for OSHA. OSHA supported the ICS in 1910.120 before there was a NIMS or a NIC. The NIC is a grass roots opportunity, similar to the Coast Guard/EPA/OSHA collaboration that took place back in 1989 to create HAZWOPER. It influences the emerging processes to integrate responder/recovery worker safety & health.

Following the speakers' presentations, there was a question and answer session.

Q. This national plan should be explicit about Federal OSHA and FEMA and their role with states that have state plans.

A.

1. HSPD 5 addressed that issue. It talks about in what circumstances national intervention needed.
2. State evaluations showed where states' weaknesses are and when they will need help.
3. Annex outlines role of locals, states, and the nation.

Q. As the Bush Administration tries to privatize government, we see the DOD etc. being outsourced. Do OSHA standards apply to these private outsourcing companies (since it is not usually involved in the military)?

A. OSHA does not get involved in uniquely military operations

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